

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10847 130439Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10847

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, BT

SUBJ: WASHINGTON VISIT OF BHUTANESE REPRESENTATIVE

REF: STATE 186147

1. BELOW ARE A NUMBER OF TOPICS WHICH MIGHT BE TOUCHED
ON DURING UN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE DAGO TSHERING'S
AUGUST 15 MEETINGS IN THE DEPARTMENT:

A. THIRD WORLD: THIRD SECRETARY LIKI DORJE WILL BE
A MEMBER OF THIS YEAR'S BHUTANESE DELEGATION TO THE
UN. LAST WEEK HE TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT BHUTAN WILL HAVE TO
VOTE WITH THE THIRD WORLD DURING THIS SESSION, EVEN IF A
CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE UNITED
STATES DEVELOPS. IF ANY QUESTIONS ARISE, BHUTAN WILL BE
GUIDED LARGELY BY INDIAN ADVICE IN DECIDING A COURSE.
(COMMENT: THE 1974 SUCCESSION IN BHUTAN, RECENT DEVELOP-
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 10847 130439Z

MENTS IN SIKKIM, FOLLOWED BY THE EMERGENCY IN INDIA HAVE

ENHANCED BHUTAN'S CONCERN ABOUT THE COLLOSSUS TO THE SOUTH. THIMPU'S DELEGATION TO THE UN THIS YEAR WILL PROBABLY BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL TO AVOID IRRITATING NEW DELHI).

B. ECONOMIC: BHUTAN CAN BE CONGRATULATED FOR THE LIMITED BUT IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC PROGRESS IT HAS MADE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. (ITS DRUK (DRAGON) ORANGE JUICE PRODUCED IN A BHUTANESE CANNING FACTORY HAS A POPULAR CONSUMER MARKET IN INDIA AND IS USED ON AIR INDIA INTER-NATIONAL FLIGHTS*) THE GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN HAS BALANCED THIS DEVELOPMENT WITH PROGRAMS TO PRESERVE TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE FORMS AND HANDICRAFTS AND TO KEEP BHUTANESE CULTURE ALIVE. CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO KEEPING BHUTAN'S LARGELY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY SELF-SUSTAINING AND NOT OVERLY DEPENDENT ON INDIAN AID. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE BHUTANESE ARE SEEKING TO EXPAND MULTI-LATERAL ASSISTANCE, AND A WPF/UNICEF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROJECT DRAWING ON TITLE II FOOD AID IS DUE TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. THE PROJECT WILL COVER ALL OF BHUTAN'S SEVENTY-ONE PRIMARY SCHOOLS. (THERE ARE ONLY ELEVEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND ELEVEN "CENTRAL" SCHOOLS IN BHUTAN.) IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO KNOW BHUTANESE INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO FUTURE AID REQUESTS, AND IN WHAT AREAS THE ASSISTANCE WILL BE REQUESTED.

C. DIPLOMATIC: WE HAVE HEARD FROM A NON-OFFICIAL NEPALESE SOURCE THAT NEPAL PRESSED BHUTAN EARLIER THIS YEAR TO OPEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. BHUTAN DECIDED AGAINST IT, PROBABLY WITH A VIEW TOWARD NOT OFFENDING THE INDIANS WHO HAVE HAD A SOMEWHAT MORE STRAINED RELATIONSHIP WITH NEPAL SINCE INDIA'S ABSORPTION OF SIKKIM. ARE THE BHUTANESE PLANNING TO EXPAND THIER DIPLOMATIC TIES BEYOND INDIA, BANGLADESH AND THE UN?

D. EDUCATION: UNDER A PROGRAM INITIATED BY AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN, TWO BHUTANESE STUDENTS ARE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WILL BEGIN COLLEGE LEVEL STUDIES IN AGRICULTURE ON U.S. GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS LATER THIS YEAR OR EARLY NEXT YEAR IF ACCEPTED AT A U.S. UNIVERSITY. TWO OTHER STUDENTS ALREADY IN THE U.S. WERE GIVEN SCHOLARSHIPS
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 10847 130439Z

LAST JANUARY. THE GOB HAS ASKED THAT WE SEEK UNIVERSITY SLOTS FOR TWO ENGINEERING STUDENTS WHO WILL STUDY IN THE U.S. AT THE GOB'S EXPENSE. WE MIGHT WANT TO EXPRESS OUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN THIS TINY BUT TO THE BHUTANESE WELCOME PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ASSIST BHUTANESE DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS.

E. RELIGIOUS: THE EFFECT OF RELIGION ON THE SOCIAL,

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF BHUTANESE LIFE CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THE LARGEST BUDDHIST SECT IN BHUTAN IS THE DRUKPA KARGUPA, WHICH FALLS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE SIKKIM-BASED KARMAPA LAMA. THE KARMAPA WAS CLOSE TO THE LAST KING AND OWNS CONSIDERABLE PROPERTY IN BHUTAN. IT IS OF INTEREST IN BHUTAN THAT THE KARMAPA VISITED THE U.S. LAST WINTER, AND THAT BUDDHISM (WE WOULD NOT TERM THIS TIBETAN BUDDHISM, RATHER JUST BUDDHISM) IS OF RAPIDLY DEVELOPING INTEREST IN THE U.S. THE KARMAPA VISITED 18 KARGUPA CENTERS AROUND THE U.S., PERFORMED VARIOUS RELIGIOUS RITUALS, AND THEN MOVED ON THE CANADA BEFORE RETURNING TO SIKKIM.

2. EMBOFF WILL DINE WITH LIKI DORJE TONIGHT AND WILL REPORT AUGUST 12 ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RE REFTEL REQUEST.
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